School Organisation Consultation

Proposal to Establish a Special Educational Needs Unit at St Paul's CofE Primary School & Nursery, Tongham

September 2025

SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL

COURAGE COMPASSION COMMUNITY
St. Paul's C of E Primary School & Nursery
TONGHAM

School Organisation Consultation

Local authority details:

Local Authority	Surrey County Council
Address	Victoria Gate Chobham Road Woking GU21 6JD

School details:

Name of School	St Paul's CofE Primary School & Nursery
Category of School	Primary
Type of School	Voluntary Controlled School
URN	125148
Address	East Ring, The Cardinals, Tongham, Farnham, Surrey
Postcode	GU10 1EF

Introduction

This paper outlines a proposal to establish a unit for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) at St Paul's CofE Primary School. St Paul's CofE Primary School expanded from a one-form entry infant school to a one-form entry primary school from September 2025. It is proposed that there will be 25 places for pupils with autism from Year R to Year 6. Commencing with the intake of a bulge class in September 2025, the proposed unit will continue to expand in line with the school, from September 2026 to September 2028. All pupils on roll in the unit will have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).

This document explains the proposed process and timescales to make this significant change to the school.

Proposal

St Paul's CofE Primary School is currently a one-form entry (1FE) primary school in the borough of Guildford in Surrey. The school was rated 'Good' by Ofsted in September 2023. In agreement with the school's Headteacher and Governing Body, Surrey County Council is proposing to establish a SEN unit at St Paul's CofE Primary School with 25 places for pupils with autism. Each pupil attending the unit will have an EHCP specifying the specialist provision within the school as an appropriate placement to meet their individual needs.

Table 1 shows the proposed timeline for the changes to take place from September 2025. Dates and phases in the timeline may change based on the outcome of this consultation.

Table 1: Proposed timeline

Phase	Date
Consultation	09/09/2025 – 07/10/2025
Review of consultation responses	07/10/2025
Outcome of consultation published on www.surreysays.co.uk	By 14/10/2025
Statutory notices	03/11/2025 – 01/12/2025
Lead Cabinet Member Decision	27/01/2026
Implementation	September 2026

It is proposed that:

1. A new SEN unit will be established to provide a total number of 25 places for autistic pupils aged 4 to 11 years.
2. There will be no change to the mainstream published admission number (PAN) of 30 from September 2025.
3. The 25 pupils within the new SEN unit will be admitted above the mainstream published admission number (PAN).
4. In September 2025, the school will be operating a SEND bulge class for children with a diagnosis of autism. This consultation forms part of the statutory process to transfer this class to a formal SEN unit for pupils with autism from September 2026.
5. All pupils placed at the unit by Surrey County Council would have an EHCP specifying the school as an appropriate placement to meet their individual needs. Further details on the admissions process for SEND specialist provision in Surrey can be found on the Surrey Local Offer website. The document 'SEND admissions processes for referrals for specialist placement for school age children' describes how this process works and is available on the Surrey County Council website.

Making representations, objections and comments

1. This consultation starts on Tuesday 9 September 2025 and concludes on Tuesday 7 October 2025.

2. A number of organisations are available locally to support families of children who have special educational needs and/ or disabilities (SEND) and young people who have SEND to share their views. Please see Information, Advice and Support – SEND Advice Surrey.

3. Any person can make comments, agree, or object to the proposal by sending representations to the local authority through the following channels:

Website	Have Your Say Today - Proposal To Establish A SEN Unit At St Paul's CofE Primary School Tongham - Commonplace
Email	schoolorg@surreycc.gov.uk
Post	Education Place Planning Surrey County Council Victoria Gate Chobham Road Woking GU21 6JD

Background

From September 2025, St Paul's CofE Primary School will be a one-form entry primary school, accommodating pupils aged 4 to 11. The school will reach a capacity of 210 from September 2028 and there is sufficient capacity within the school to accommodate a SEN unit. Table 2 shows the number of pupils on roll in each year group across the school.

Table 2: Number of pupils on roll at St Paul's CofE Primary School & Nursery by National Curriculum Year (NCY) group

	Year R	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Total
Number of pupils currently at St Paul's CofE Primary School & Nursery	**30**	**30**	**30**	**32**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**122**

Source data: Synergy August 2025

School vision and curriculum

St Paul's CofE Primary School is passionate about providing access to learning for all children. In September 2025, the school will be operating a SEND bulge class for children with a diagnosis of autism. This consultation forms part of the statutory process to transfer this class to a formal SEN unit for pupils with autism from September 2026.

Communication with parents

The school believes collaboration with parents and carers is key to ensuring the best possible outcomes for pupils. They start the year with a 'meet the teacher' session to introduce parents to their child's teacher, as well as to gain an understanding of the expectations of the upcoming year. In addition to the statutory EHCP annual review meeting, termly parent meetings are held to discuss each child's progress. There is also an opportunity to discuss a child's end of year report. Home/school communication systems provide an opportunity for parents and staff to communicate on a regular basis.
More information about the school's vision and curriculum can be found on the school website: St Paul's CofE Primary School & Nursery, Tongham

Reasons for the establishment of a new SEN unit for pupils with autism at St Paul's CofE Primary School & Nursery

Table 3 shows the latest projections for primary aged pupils with EHCPs in Surrey who have autism and/or have communication and interaction needs identified as their primary need in Guildford. Current projections do not incorporate the proposed places at St Paul's CofE Primary School, and show a consistent increase in this cohort year on year to 2029/30, with demand greatly outweighing the level of provision within local schools throughout the planning period.

Table 3: Primary forecasts for children with autism in Guildford

Residential Area	School Location	Academic Year								
		2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30	2030-31	2031-32	2032-33	2033-34
Guildford	Surrey	149	151	155	168	164	161	158	154	151
	Out of county	14	18	20	21	24	24	25	24	24
	Total SEN Need	**163**	**169**	**175**	**189**	**187**	**185**	**182**	**178**	**176**
	Total SEN Places Available	**84**	**83**	**81**	**82**	**78**	**76**	**76**	**81**	**80**
	Difference	**-91**	**-106**	**-106**	**-103**	**-104**	**-102**	**-100**	**-93**	**-94**

The proposed SEN unit at St Paul's CofE Primary School will have 25 specialist school places. Should these pupils be required to attend an education provision in the independent sector, costs would equate to around £1.325m per year every year, based on an average unit cost of £53k per pupil per annum for independent sector provision. This is compared to the average cost for state-maintained specialist places at £23k per pupil per annum and equivalent costs for 25 places of £575k. Provision of the additional state-maintained specialist school places would generate an approximate saving of £30k per pupil place per year.

This data clearly shows that sustained use of the independent sector in the future would constitute an inefficient use of limited resources and severely impact Surrey's ability to deliver services and support for children, young people, and families, whilst remaining financially sustainable.

Surrey's ambition for children and young people who have additional needs and disabilities is to develop high quality fit for purpose local state-maintained specialist school provision that enables better long-term outcomes. This in turn ensures that Surrey resident pupils are educated closer to home, more connected to local communities and local support services, and have increased opportunities to enter employment in the future.

Table 4 shows the current SEN unit provision within mainstream schools in Guildford.

Table 4 Current SEN unit provision within primary schools in Guildford

School	Designation	Age	Number of Places
Burpham Foundation Primary School	Speech, Language & Communication Needs (SLCN)	4-11 (Years R to 6)	13
Guildford Grove Primary School	Hearing Impairment (HI)	4-11 (Years R to 6)	15
Northmead Junior School	Speech, Language & Communication Needs (SLCN)	7-11 (Years 3 to 6)	15
Walsh Church of England Junior School	Moderate Learning Difficulties (MLD)	7-11 (Years 3 to 6)	14
Worplesdon Primary School	Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD)	4-11 (Years R to 6)	23
		Total	**80**

Key outcomes and benefits

Expanding outstanding sufficient and sustainable special school provision for Surrey resident primary age pupils in Guildford will provide the following benefits as stated in the Developing local Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Provision report to Cabinet on 25 January 2022:

1. Benefits realisation ensures Surrey's maintained specialist education provision is fit for purpose and creates additional employment/supported internship opportunities for residents around areas of expansion.
2. Children, young people, and families can access the same level of high-quality support wherever they live in Surrey. We have a good, shared understanding of our children and young people who have SEND in Surrey and our support offer matches their identified needs.
3. Expanding Surrey's specialist provision aligns with the Preparation for Adulthood programme and strategy for Post-16 to create local further education and employment pathways such as apprenticeships and supported internships. This enables young people who have SEND to make a successful transition to adulthood and secure employment.
4. Capacity created locally will also make certain that SEND home to school transport distance and costs are reduced so that pupils attend their closest most appropriate school with shorter journey times. Opportunities for developing independent travel skills can be maximised as a result of children and young people being educated closer to home. This will also address local congestion around school sites as well as traffic flow around the county, which will be of benefit to Surrey's Green Agenda.
5. The distribution and occupancy of current Special Schools and SEN Units in mainstream schools clearly illustrates that there is insufficient provision of Autism and Communication & Social Interaction Needs, Moderate Learning Difficulties, Severe Learning Difficulties and Social Emotional Mental Health Needs Special places.

6. The approved remodification and expansion programme will ensure that additional places are matched appropriately to need type, phases of education and geographic locations.

An Equality Impact Assessment is being completed throughout the consultation process and will be published as part of the Lead Cabinet Member Decision meeting.

Implementation plan

Finance and resourcing

The school will receive funding per pupil per year for each agreed planned place commissioned. The school will also receive a "top up" sum for each pupil on roll at the SEN unit, appropriate to the needs of individual children.

Year	No. Places	Place Funding (per pupil)	Top-Up (per pupil)	AY Total
1 (AY 25/26)	5	£10,000	£7,743.46	**£88,171.30**
2 (AY 26/27)	15	£6,000*	£7,743.46	**£246,151.90**
3 (AY 27/28)	22	£6,000*	£7,743.46	**£330,356.10**
4 (AY 28/29)	25	£6,000*	£7,743.46	**£355,586.50**

*Year 2 place funding reduces to 6k per place for the places that existed the year before. £10,000 place funding will be paid for the new places phasing in. This will be reflected year on year until the unit is full. As this is a maintained school, new places created from September are funded at £10,000 from Sept-March and at £6,000 thereafter (if occupied on October census date).
(Figures exclude mainstream National Funding Formula funding and assumes children are on roll for the full academic year)

A Surrey maintained special school with experience of setting up new provision will be supporting the school with the start-up of the new SEN unit. This will support the training and ongoing development of the provision over the first academic year.

Staffing

The new provision will be run and overseen by a lead teacher/SEND Manager. The class will be supported by Higher Level Teaching Assistants (HLTAs) and Learning Support Assistants (LSAs).

Capital planning and buildings

Growth model

It is proposed that the unit reach intended capacity from September 2028, growing in line with the school's own mainstream age range expansion. The growth model is shown in Table 5 below.

Table 5 Growth model for SEN unit at St Paul's CofE Primary School, Tongham

	Academic Year				
	2025/2026	**2026/2027**	**2027/2028**	**2028/2029**	**2029/2030**
NYC 0	**0**	**3**	**3**	**3**	3
NYC 1		**3**	**3**	**3**	**3**
NYC 2			**3**	**3**	**3**
NCY 3	5	4	4	4	4
NCY 4		5	4	4	4
NCY 5			5	4	4
NCY 6				5	4
Total	**8**	**15**	**22**	**26**	**25**

A bulge class will open with 5 spaces in Key stage 2 from September 2025, with this class transferring to the SEN unit from September 2026. A new Year R and Year 3 cohort will also join the school from September 2026 year on year until full in 2028.

Consultations, approvals and overall timescales

1. It is proposed that the changes commence from September 2026. The proposed changes require a period of consultation, the publication of Statutory Notices and the agreement of Surrey County Council's Cabinet Member for Education and Learning if the proposal is to proceed.

2. The first stage of consultation will open from Tuesday 9 September 2025 and concludes Tuesday 7 October 2025. During this period, Surrey County Council will share it's proposals with the wider professional network, schools including headteachers and chairs of governors, with unions, parent representatives, partner agencies and with the staff and parents of the school subject to the proposals.

3. Following the initial consultation period, it is proposed to publish a Statutory Notice for a four-week period. The publication of Notices is when the local authority formally states that it intends to implement the proposed changes. This will be the final opportunity for consultees to make their views known before a final decision is taken. Following the consultation periods officers will summarise the feedback and will report to the Cabinet Member for Education and Learning.

Have your say

Surrey County Council and St Paul's CofE Primary School & Nursery would like to know what people in the area feel about the proposal. The consultation will open on Tuesday 9 September 2025.

You can respond by:

a) Accessing the consultation online on the 'Commonplace' website via the following link: Have Your Say Today - Proposal To Establish A SEN Unit At St Paul's CofE Primary School Tongham - Commonplace

b) Completing the consultation response form that is available alongside this document. You can email the form or print it, complete it and send it back to the address below:

St Paul's CofE Primary School – SEN unit
Education Place Planning
Victoria Gate
Chobham Road
Woking
GU21 6JD

Email: schoolorg@surreycc.gov.uk with the subject: FAO St Paul's CofE Primary School – SEN unit

All responses must be received by 5pm on Tuesday 7 October 2025.

What happens next?

We will hold an online public meeting for parents and any other interested parties to discuss the proposals and to hear your views.

The online event will be held on Wednesday 17th September **at 6pm via Microsoft Teams.** There will be a short presentation followed by questions and answers. Please email schoolorg@surreycc.gov.uk to register your interest and you will be sent a link to the online event.

Please join to share your views and ask questions. You do not have to have a child at the school to join the meeting.

At the end of the consultation period, we will review all the responses received and share these with the school and publish them.

Subject to the outcome of the consultation, we intend to publish a Statutory Notice at the school, in a local newspaper and online stating our intention to open a SEN unit for pupils with autism at St Paul's CofE Primary School. There will be a four-week statutory consultation period for further representations to be received by the council.

All representations will be reviewed before a final decision is taken by the Cabinet Member for Education and Learning.